

Record

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Baptist Record sets holiday deadlines

Due to postal regulations that limit The Baptist Record to 50 issues per year, the newspaper will not publish on Thursday, December 29. A special edition will be published on January 5 and will not be available for church news. Therefore, all church news that needs to be published before the issue of January 12 must be printed in the issues of December 15 or December 22.

The deadline for the issue of December 15 is the close of business on December 8. The deadline for the issue of December 22 is the close of business on December 15. The deadline for the issue of January 12 is the close of business on January 5.

Baptists boost Thanksgiving spirit

BILOXI, Miss. (BP and local reports) — Baptist volunteers gave away 17,000 Thanksgiving turkeys in a two-day event in Biloxi that culminated with a worship service featuring Christian music artists Newsong and Clay Crosse, country music singer Mark Wills, and a message by Georgia pastor Johnny Hunt on Nov. 21-22.

"Our community lost more than 20,000 jobs after Hurricane Katrina, so I knew that there was a good possibility that 20,000 families would appreciate having a turkey for Thanksgiving," Kevin Clifton, pastor of Bay Vista Church in Biloxi, told Baptist Press.

Over the course of a few months, the church was an operations center for the distribution of more than four million pounds of food to needy families, and as Thanksgiving approached, the members began to catch a vision for giving away free turkeys to those families in a continued effort to show the love of Christ.

So Bay Vista Church spread the word, and in the end, about 200 Christian organizations had contributed money to the project. A man in Virginia gave the church a check for \$75,000 to get them started, and the church gave another \$25,000 from its disaster relief fund.

The next feat was accomplished when Bay Vista Church was granted permission to use the local Mississippi Coast Coliseum as a site for distributing the turkeys. The complex was heavily damaged by the hurricane, but in preparation for the handout, volunteers from several states brought in machinery and manpower to clear debris and ensure that the parking lot could handle the massive crowds that would come to pick up a free turkey.

Members of Bay Vista Church had developed a friendship with Jim Law, an associate pastor at First Church in Woodstock,

Ga., where Johnny Hunt is senior pastor. When Bay Vista Church told them about the plans to give away a massive number of turkeys for Thanksgiving, Hunt was eager to travel down and be a part of the effort.

Newsong, Crosse, and Wills also got word and wanted to help, Clifton said.

From 10 a.m.-6 p.m. on Nov. 21, Bay Vista Church and other volunteers handed out about 9,000 turkeys. Traffic was snarled all around the coliseum and lines were long, but families with few possessions left with the main dish for a traditional Thanksgiving meal.

In the first hour alone Monday morning, 600 turkeys were distributed, according to The Sun Herald newspaper in Biloxi.

The turkeys, weighing 12-15 pounds, were limited to one per car, and Gospel tracts accompanied them when they reached the hands of local residents. If the people needed prayer, volunteers took time to meet individually with them as well.

"It was amazing to hear their deep appreciation and their awe that churches would be that committed to them, not ever knowing them, not having met them," Clifton said of the recipients. "They knew what kind of money had to be spent in order to pull that off. It's been interesting to hear people who do not go to church say, 'If it weren't for the churches, we wouldn't have made it.'"

In fact, Clifton said Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour, who is Presbyterian, has credited Baptists with getting the state back on its feet through their tireless efforts in feeding multitudes and giving their time and money to clean up entire communities.

"He said everywhere he went he saw Baptists out there on the hedges and highways, so we were thankful to be a part of it," Clifton said.

The second day of the turkey giveaway ended with games and events for children in the coliseum parking lot from 1 p.m.-5 p.m., followed by a concert and then a message by Hunt. Clifton estimated about 2,500 people were in the crowd.

"He preached about the fact that Jesus is still in the life-changing business," Clifton said of Hunt. "He talked about his testimony, how God had changed his life and how Jesus wanted to change their lives. Through his testimony, he was able to share Christ with them, and we had about 35 decisions made."

The highlight of the event for Clifton was the lesson God reminded him of through the setting. A short distance behind the stage where the musicians sang and Hunt preached was the President Casino Broadwater Resort sitting on top of a Holiday Inn building, carried there by the Hurricane Katrina's storm surge.

"The backdrop for this whole event was the fact that Jesus said don't build your house on sinking sand because when a storm comes it will wash it away," he said. "Build it on the rock of Jesus."

While community members were grateful to receive free turkeys and volunteers were glad to minister to them by meeting their physical needs, Clifton and other organizers hope people took away some portion of the idea that God is the only sure foundation on which to set their hope.

"We wanted to show them about how to build their lives," Clifton said. "Most had been building them on the sand of casinos, and we want so desperately to show them that it's the Lord Jesus Christ that can supply all of their needs according to His riches. That's what we're after."

"These casinos did not bring, to my knowledge, one truckload of food or one truckload of water to this community."

Woodward takes P/LD post at MBCB

JACKSON, Ms. (Special) — Charles Alan Woodward, longtime pastor of First Church, Ellisville, has joined the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) as Pastor/Leadership Development (P/LD) Director. He replaces Matt Buckles, who resigned to accept the call to pastor First Church, Vicksburg.

Woodward, who was born in Gadsden, Al., and grew up in Miami, holds a bachelor of arts degree from Baptist-affiliated William Carey College in Hattiesburg; a master of divinity degree from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky.; and a doctor of theology degree from New Orleans Seminary.

While at William Carey College, Woodward was president of the school's Ministerial



Woodward

Association and recipient of the B.F. Smith Scholarship Award for the ministerial student with the highest academic average.

He was licensed by Allapattah Church in Miami and ordained by University Church in Hattiesburg. Since 1970, he has pastored churches in Kentucky, Louisiana, and Mississippi, including First Church, Ellisville, since 1982.

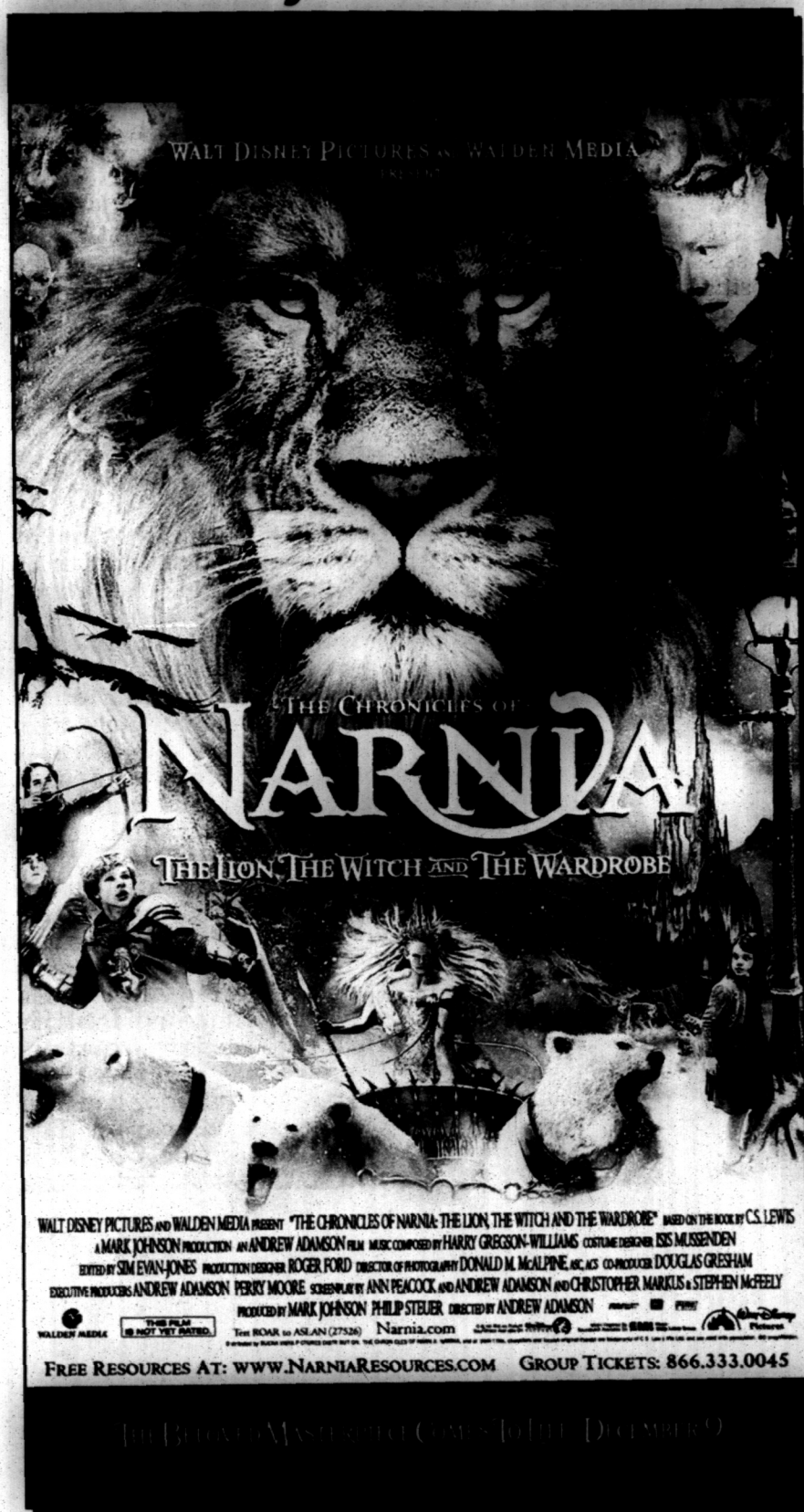
Woodward has been married for 36 years to the former Frances Marie Wright of Hattiesburg, and they have three adult sons.

Steve Stone, MBCB associate executive director for church growth, said he is happy to welcome Woodward after an exhaustive search for the person God chose to succeed Buckles.

"If you measure the time in hours and days that has been spent in search for the Pastor/Leadership Development Director, it appears to be a long time; if you measure the search in leadership potential, then the time has been well spent. Alan Woodward comes to us with a pastor's heart and with a proven record of ministry," Stone said.

"I am delighted to be a part of the MBCB family," Woodward said. "For several months God has been prompting me toward serving him through this ministry. My goal is to strengthen the work of pastors and churches through the wise appropriation of the resources at our disposal. We want to help in whatever way we can. Pray for us, and call on us."

LifeWay sets web site for Narnia premiere



NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe began intriguing readers well before the era of spectacular multimillion-dollar Hollywood special effects or sophisticated websites available to anyone with Internet access.

On Dec. 9, both longtime fans and people unfamiliar with C.S. Lewis' famous fable will have the opportunity to see it recounted with world-class technology on giant screens around the world.

LifeWay's e-business group, meanwhile, is bringing aspects of The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe to smaller screens with its website dedicated to providing background on Lewis and insights into the multiple Christian allegories worked into his story.

"We believe providing conversation starters and other suggestions for discussing the film will help generate opportunities for one to share their faith with a friend or colleague," said Gary McClure, LifeWay's e-business marketing manager. "Simply put, LifeWay's site is the Christian's complement to Narnia.com."

McClure said LifeWay.com/Narnia is a dynamic site that e-business plans to continue updating throughout the film's run in theaters and eventual rental availability. The site also will serve as a resource for the subsequent Chronicles of Narnia films, which Disney already has announced as the biggest film project in its history.

LifeWay.com/Narnia features numerous resources, including information about the movie, books, music and Christian perspectives. McClure said he is especially excited by the free interactive Webinar, or online seminar, that helps viewers understand the Christian themes throughout the film.

As the potential Narnia movie frenzy ensues, LifeWay will offer resources through LifeWay Christian Stores, Broadman & Holman and LifeWay.com that will address the questions and other needs of average viewers as well as ministry leaders.

With 2004's The Passion of The Christ, it became apparent that major Hollywood productions can have a profoundly Christian impact, McClure

said. He expects The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe to have the same effect.

"However, we anticipate greater potential to reach the unchurched through this film due to the indirect references to Christianity," he noted.

For viewers already familiar with the Chronicles, LifeWay's site offers a chance to see how filmmakers interpreted Narnian characters, which they intentionally depicted as closely to the books as possible.

McClure said the site also features background information, illustrations, the movie trailer and other components that would be helpful for people unfamiliar with the series to examine before seeing the movie.

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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In addition to these resources, the website also features Narnia giveaways and other activities.

"The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe is a classic tale of ultimate friendship and sacrifice," McClure said. "People who are introduced to it through the movie will likely be intrigued enough to pursue the other books in the Narnia series."

"LifeWay wants to be the trusted resource to help individuals become fully engaged from a Christian perspective," he said.

C.S. Lewis was an Oxford professor and member of an incredible roundtable of authors called the "Inklings," which included J.R.R. Tolkien, author of the Lord of the Rings series of novels.

Born on Nov. 29, 1898 in Belfast, Ireland, Lewis was an ardent atheist until his conversion to Christianity at the age of 33. His Chronicles of Narnia series of novels, as well as other works after his conversion, are widely accepted as containing elements of the Christian faith.

Lewis died on November 22, 1963 — the same day U.S. President John F. Kennedy was assassinated.



MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS

Killer executed

SAN'A, Yemen (BP) — A Muslim militant connected to the 2002 murders of three Southern Baptist medical workers in Yemen was executed Nov. 27. Ali al-Jarallah was blindfolded and shot in the courtyard of the central prison in San'a, Yemen's capital, according to the Associated Press and other news services. Al-Jarallah was convicted and sentenced to death in 2003 for plotting the medical workers' deaths and for the assassination of a prominent national politician, Yemeni Socialist Party leader Jarallah Omar. Yemeni authorities said Al-Jarallah planned the Dec. 30, 2002, attack on the former Jibla Baptist Hospital carried out by gunman Abed Abdul Razak Kamel. Kamel walked into the hospital compound that day and shot and killed hospital director William Koehn, physician Martha Myers and purchasing agent Kathleen Gariety. A pharmacist was seriously wounded but later recovered. Kamel, also convicted and sentenced to death for the murders, remains in prison. No date has been set for his execution. Kamel admitted in court to coordinating the attack with al-Jarallah. Yemeni officials believe both are tied to the al Qaeda terrorist network. Police reported finding audiotapes of al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in Kamel's home after the murders. The Jibla hospital provided care for thousands of people in the impoverished Middle Eastern nation for more than 30 years after it was started by Southern Baptist workers. Reopened in early 2003 by the Yemeni government's health ministry, it continues its healing work under the name Peace Hospital but is no longer formally associated with Southern Baptists.

Looking back

10 years ago

The Mississippi Missionary Parents Fellowship meets at Camp Garaywa in Clinton. Formed in August, 1995, it is the only known group of its kind.

20 years ago

Sales of ten acres of land owned by Clarke College and plans to honor five long-time state convention agency heads were among business matters passed by messengers to the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

50 years ago

The Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, based in Richmond, Va., for more than a century, may move elsewhere rather than submit to city taxation.



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with God in your own words:*

1. Lord, I admit that I need you.
(*I have sinned.*)
2. I want forgiveness for my
sins and freedom from eter-
nal death. (*I repent.*)
3. I believe Jesus died and
rose from the grave to forgive
my sins and to restore my
relationship with you.
(*I believe in Jesus.*)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus
Christ into my life. From this
time on, I want to live in a
loving relationship with Him.
(*I receive Christ as my Savior
and Lord.*)

*"But as many as received him,
to them he gave the right to
become children of God, even to
those who believe in his name."
(John 1:12)*

*If you make a decision for
Jesus Christ today, contact a
local Baptist church for spiri-
tual guidance.*

STRETCHING THE RUBBER BAND

How far can you stretch a rubber band? Of course, the answer to that question depends on the size and the strength of the rubber band you have. Every morning as I go out to get my paper, it is neatly rolled up and held together by a rubber band. Some days when the newspaper is small and there is not too much tension it does its work. Other days when the paper is big and the ads are numerous it is stretched close to the max. In either case there it is doing its job and doing it well.

I got to thinking about rubber bands and how far you can stretch them, so I did a little research trying to find out where they came from and who came up with the idea. I discovered at least three men, who supposedly invented the rubber band, and probably if I had kept looking I would have found others who made the same claim.

In America back in the mid-1800s the first patent was issued for a rubber band. It seems like a whole bunch of folks came up with a great idea all at once. In fact, one list of the top ten most important inventions in history included the rubber band. I know for some of you who are caught up in today's high-tech world this invention may not seem that important. However, if you print off enough paper about some idea that you discovered on the worldwide web you will probably need to put a rubber band around it to keep it all together. As I was thinking about how far you could stretch a rubber band, I thought about our churches



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

that financially have stretched and stretched and stretched again. They have given to one need after another and one special offering after another and seem to keep on stretching.

The rubber band is made for stretching and giving to do its job. As I was researching rubber bands I found out that what makes them able to do what they do are the special polymers that allow them to be elastic and become bigger than they are and then go back to their original position. I realized that is a good thing for the rubber band, and it is also the way God made His people. He made us to stretch and to give beyond ourselves not to destroy us but to use us. I have watched as individuals, congregations, associations, and special groups have given as never before. Just recently it was reported in the paper that Mississippi continues to hold its ranking as number one in the nation for charitable giving. While virtually every other state in the nation ranks ahead of us in per capita earnings, we continue to give like no one else in the nation. I marvel as I see the outpouring of gifts and the stretching that takes place as week-by-week people give of their resources to sustain the life and ministry of the Lord's

church and beyond that they give significantly to the Cooperative Program that reaches from their doorstep to the ends of the earth. They give as a special need arises in the local community or to a need the size of Katrina. They give to special mission offerings like Annie Armstrong, Margaret Lackey, and Lottie Moon. Then there are special opportunities of love and involvement at a revival, some community crisis, or mission effort and people willing and graciously give again. They stretch, and stretch, and stretch, and stretch.

That led me to my thought about how far can a rubber band stretch? It is possible to pull, push, and stretch it until it breaks. That is not good! While a rubber band is made to stretch, of course, it does have its limits and no doubt so do we. When you are putting a rubber band around a large bundle of papers you quickly realize how far it will extend without doing damage. I believe that God guides His people into gracious opportunities of giving that help on a large scale and do not hurt. I have heard people say, "We need to give until it hurts." I am not sure that is the way it works. The people who stretch the most seem to be the people

who give until it helps and maybe a better way to say it is "They give until it feels good."

As you approach the end of the year with needs in your church, across our Gulf Coast, and around the world, I want to encourage you to stretch in a God-guided way and give to the limits of great joy. While the needs in our state are great, the needs that continue around the world are tremendous. I do not want you to give until you break, because if you think about it then you have to tie the rubber band together and it is actually shorter than in the beginning and probably not as efficient or effective. It is interesting though as we think about giving that while we sometimes want to limit our giving we never want God to limit His giving toward us in anyway. He reaches into new realms of sharing with us beyond our wildest imagination.

Finally, I thought about the rubber band that may have held a large volume of paper together and when it is taken off it returns to the norm only to be ready to be used again. What a beautiful picture of what God wants to do with us. At times He pulls us to our limits and blesses us in doing so. He uses us for a special task, allows us to enjoy the pleasures of serving Him, and then He renews us. There we are ready to be stretched for the next task He has for us and the next blessing to be enjoyed. Just remember when God pulls at you He is not doing so to break you but to bless you.

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Britain OKs partnerships; pastor acquitted

LONDON (BP) — Great Britain in December will become the latest country to liberalize its laws for homosexual couples when it legalizes same-sex civil partnerships.

The civil partnerships law, similar to civil union laws in Vermont and Connecticut, grants homosexual couples the legal benefits of marriage without using the word "marriage."

Homosexual couples can begin the process Dec. 5 by notifying the British government and, after a 15-day waiting period, hold their civil partnership ceremony.

Unlike the United States — where there is a significant movement to ban homosexual marriage — European countries

have liberalized their laws in recent years to include homosexual couples. Belgium, the Netherlands and Spain recognize homosexual marriage. Other countries, such as Germany and Sweden, grant same-sex couples at least some of the legal benefits of marriage.

Some prominent British homosexual men such as Elton John and George Michael say they will take advantage of the law and hold a ceremony with their respective partner.

"I'm sure Kenny and I will be doing the old legal thing, but we won't be doing the whole veil and gown thing," Michael, a member of the 1980s group Wham!, told the Associated Press.

Conservatives, though, say the new law is playing word games. "We feel that it's gay marriage in all but name," Mike Judge, a spokesperson for the conservative Christian Institute, told USA Today. "It changes the nature of what we understand marriage to be in society: ... The lifelong union of a man and woman."

A document on the Christian Institute further states: "[O]nce marriage has been equated with such unions, where will it end? If two men can 'marry' or 'partner,' why stop there? If all relationships are equal surely the bi-sexual will need to 'marry' two people."

Meanwhile, Sweden's Supreme Court Nov. 29 acquitted Swedish pastor Ake Green on "hate crimes" charges, ruling that he did not break the law by preaching about the biblical view of homosexuality.

Although it was a 5-0 decision, a lower court last year gave Green a one-month jail sentence for his sermon. That ruling was appealed. The Swedish law prevents criticism of homosexuals.

The case was watched closely worldwide by conservatives, who warn that the homosexual activist movement is infringing on religious freedoms.

"Voicing one's conscience is a fundamental human right," Benjamin Bull, an attorney with the conservative Alliance Defense Fund, said in a state-

ment. "This is a huge victory for religious liberty everywhere. In this contest between religious freedom and the radical homosexual agenda, religious freedom prevailed."

According to a sermon transcript, Green read from Leviticus 18:22-30 and then said, "The Bible clearly teaches about these abnormalities. Sexual abnormalities are a deep cancerous tumor in the entire society."

Green also quoted 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 and said homosexuals can have freedom from their sin through a relationship with Christ: "The Word of God offers power to live a pure life. This Bible passage talks about what they used to live like — in sexual immorality and adultery, but they were washed clean. Hallelujah!"

The sermon transcript is available at www.akegreen.org.

For more information about the national debate over gay marriage and homosexual rights, visit <http://www.bpnews.net/samesexmarriage>.

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Pro footballer takes on Africa AIDS tragedy

PHILADELPHIA (BP) — In the United States, the death rate from Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is down, and the quality and length of life for patients is up. Many Americans have been lulled into complacency about the disease, various reports indicate.

It's a different story in Africa. According to statistics from the United Nations, nearly 29 million people in Africa have died from AIDS-related causes since 1981, when the disease was first recognized, compared to about 501,000 people in the United States — including about 3.1 million deaths in Africa in 2004 versus 15,000 in the States.

While no figures seem to be available for the number of American children orphaned by AIDS, in Africa, it's at least 13 million and is expected to rise to perhaps 40 million by 2010.

"It's an epidemic of cataclysmic proportions," said Herb Lusk, pastor of Greater Exodus Baptist Church in Philadelphia, where about 2,000 people attend Sunday morning worship.

Too many children in Africa are growing up without parents, education, direction, moral constraints or love, Lusk said. "This is a continent in so much trouble they're losing the battle. I talked with a scientist in Africa and those are his words: 'Africa is losing the battle.'"

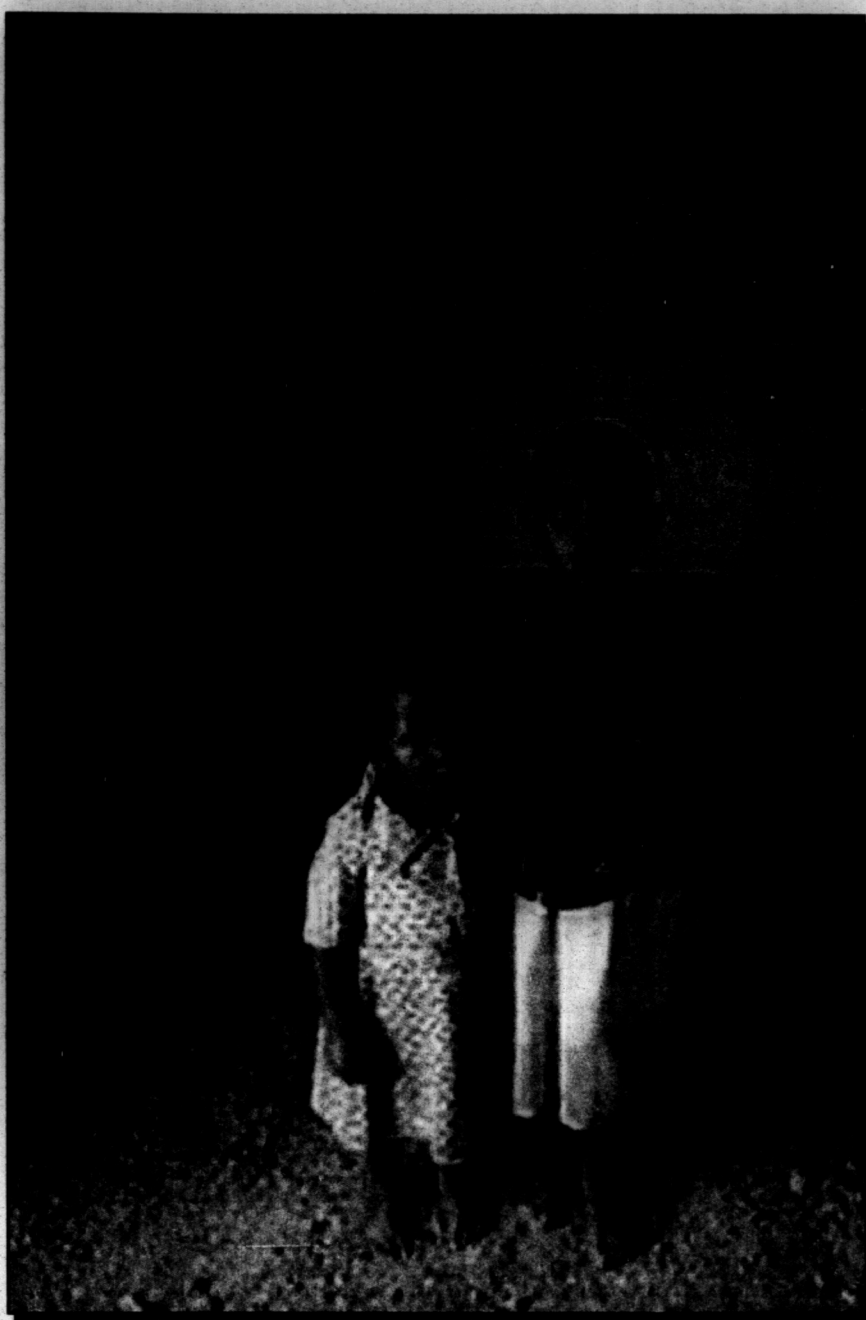
Lusk has channeled his passionate convictions into Stand for Africa, a movement he began two years ago that now is spreading across the nation.

His vision is that an ever-widening circle of evangelical Christians in the United States will provide resources for evangelical Christians in Africa who are already doing what they can to make a difference. A video and other information about the Stand for Africa initiative can be obtained at www.standforafrica.org.

When Lusk first became aware of the number of AIDS orphans in Africa, in 2003, he led Greater Exodus Church to give \$250,000 to reputable churches in Africa with ongoing ministries to AIDS orphans.

"We think the African people have the solutions to their own problems," Lusk said. "If you can find an African working hard — committed to their country and their people — that person is a better investment than anything you could transport over there from America...."

"There are so many needs," Lusk noted. "You can't stop with just providing orphanages or medical facilities. Some of the resources have to go for drilling wells. I saw kids dipping ladles in mud holes to get something to drink."



YOUNG ORPHANS — Two young African boys stand atop the burial site of their parents who died of AIDS. The boys are among 13 million African children orphaned by the AIDS epidemic in Africa — and the number continues to rise each year at an alarming rate. (BP photo courtesy of Stand for Africa)

Clean water, shelter, food, medicine, education, moral direction, spiritual guidance — it's "a huge task, a God-sized task," Lusk acknowledged.

"I don't think it's possible to turn it around without the church coming together," he continued. "It's going to take the whole church, all of us, and if we come together across denominational lines and color and race and creed lines and reach critical mass, I think it can be our salvation."

"The thing that frightens me the most," said Lusk, a former running back for the Philadelphia Eagles, "is not what is going on in Africa, as bad as it is. It's what will happen if the American church doesn't respond."

World Aids Day was observed on Dec. 1. Less than a month after last year's awareness-building events, a horrific tsunami in Asia diverted people's attention. In the months since, there have been devastating hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, mudslides, terrorist attacks across the globe, and ongoing strife in the Middle East.

All the while, though, the AIDS-related death rate in Africa has continued to mount. "It's like a tsunami of death rolling over Africa every six months — 7,000 people a day die from AIDS in Africa," Lusk said. "Too often what happens is that Africa gets pushed aside because these other horrific things come up. We can't do that anymore. We're com-

mitted to not lay down our fervor or commitment to Africa."

Stand for Africa has raised more than \$350,000 since November 2003 in fundraising and awareness-building that goes on "24/7," Lusk said.

Lusk has a reputation for successfully tackling big projects. When he was called as pastor of the downtown Greater Exodus Baptist Church in 1982, he had a 17-member congregation and a million-dollar debt.

He led the congregation to pay off that debt and \$3.5 million more in renovations, and in 1989 established People For People as the community development outreach arm of the church.

People For People includes a charter school, banquet facility, Welfare-to-Work transition program, a \$7.5 million investment in computerized office skills training programs, a state-of-the-art youth entertainment center, an after-school program, small business development, community banking and finance, summer reading and banking programs, an early childhood development center and a credit union. Its next project: a moderate-density affordable housing initiative.

Lusk also is chairman of the Greater Philadelphia Healthy Marriage Coalition and a faith-based initiatives adviser to President George W. Bush. The president visited the church in June 2004 to deliver a major address on U.S. initiatives to combat the global AIDS/HIV crisis.

"Herb is a social entrepreneur who can make things happen," Bush told the audience at Greater Exodus Baptist Church. "He believes, as I do, in the power of faith to touch every heart and to change every life.... Herb Lusk is a general in the army of compassion."

Reflecting on his time with the Philadelphia Eagles, Lusk said, "The discipline that it took to become a professional football player is very similar to the discipline it takes to build a successful ministry in inner-city Philadelphia. It requires that kind of intensity, that kind of detail."

He's carrying that intensity to other cities where people are catching a vision for Stand for Africa, such as Indianapolis, where he recently spoke to 400 people who are planning a rally next fall similar to the recent Philadelphia rally that raised more than \$100,000 for African orphans.

New York City is in the early stages of a plan, as are Baltimore, Dallas, Chicago and Los Angeles.

"Pastor Herb Lusk is a dynamic, determined, compassionate focused champion of the cause for the least and the lost," said Gary Frost, director of missions for the Metro New York Baptist Association. "He's a man of action. A lot of preachers talk about the HIV/AIDS cause, but Herb has sacrificially taken action to make a difference."

Pressing toward a time when evangelical Christians everywhere will catch a vision for the benefit of working together to help African orphans, Lusk acknowledged, "What we're doing is just a drop in the bucket but the more drops we get, the quicker we can fill the bucket."

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx, 1932 - 2004
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TFP MBQF OBQNF OBC-
FAN WQACF OZ SZEQ
OZ GTNN, OBQF DZZY
LG, TFP DCRO LG UZLV
BQTPN; RZV UZLV VQPQE-
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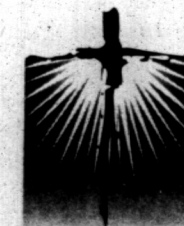
OMQFOU-QCABO

Clue: M = W

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John Thirteen: Thirty-Four.

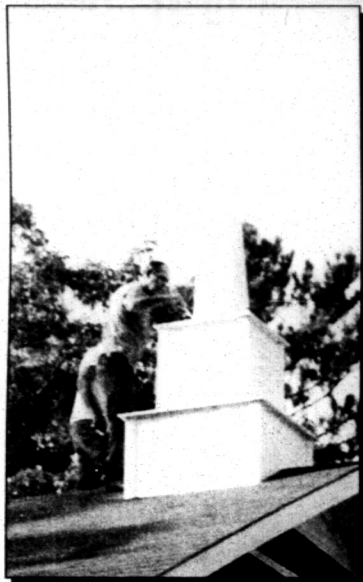


Lusk



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Building Additions, Poplar Springs Church, Itawamba County



2. World Hunger Fundraiser, Sebastopol Church, Union

1. **Poplar Springs Church, Itawamba County**, recently added a steeple and porch to their church. Leamon Lindsey built and placed the steeple on the church with the help of Junior McAlister. Shown are some of the church members in front of the recently built porch.

2. **Sebastopol Church, Union**, collected over \$1,200 for the World Hunger Fund. Shown are, front row, from left: Thomas Varner. Second row: Stephen, Harrison, and Roderick Varner. Back row: Clint Adams, Sam Houston, Lacey and Tyler Gilmore, and Ian Miles.

3. **New Salem Church, Liberty**, baptized fifteen people at the Amite River near Dude Bridge on Hwy 567 on Oct. 9.

4. **Woodlawn Church, Vicksburg**, recently ordained Cecil Bryant as deacon on Oct. 16. Shown are pastor Kent Campbell and Bryant.

5. **Leaf River Church, Pineville**, will present their Christmas cantata Dec. 18, 6 p.m., with fellowship following.

6. **First Church, Lyman**, ordained Gaines Campbell and Oscar Barnes as deacons. Shown are Campbell, daughter Brandy Campbell, Garland Boyd, Barnes, wife Patsy Barnes, and Bill Spears.

7. **Hope Church, Neshoba County**, held a dedication service Nov. 13 for the 29 shoeboxes collected for Operation Christmas Child.

8. **Flowood Church, Flowood**, ordained Mike Brown as a deacon Sept. 11.



8. Brown

9. **Fernwood Church, Gulfport**, will host several Christmas events: A Christmas Sing, Dec. 11, 6 p.m.; Children's Christmas program, Dec. 18, 11 a.m.; The Gift Goes On, Dec. 18, 6 p.m., followed by fellowship; and Christmas day worship, 10 a.m. For more information, phone (228) 896-4556.

10. **Crossroads Church, Petal**, ordained Jimmy Lea as deacon Sept. 25. Shown are Lea and Jimmy Windham, pastor.



11. Eleven young people made their public profession of Christ Nov. 20 at **Drew Church, Drew**: Jackson Linebarger, Charley Tackett, Kaci Mosco, Lauren Tackett, Tori Ragon, Lauren Dickerson, C. J. Burchfield, Chelsea Dickerson, Caci Stringfellow, Alex Wilson, and Kayla Burchfield.

12. **Crossgates Church, Brandon**, will present All Hearts Come Home for Christmas Dec. 9, 7 p.m.; Dec. 10, 3:30 and 7 p.m.; and Dec. 11, 3:30 and 7 p.m. Free admission; tickets available by calling (601) 824-2775.

13. **Friendship Church, Aberdeen**, will present Christmas in Reverse, Dec. 18, 6 p.m., followed by a social.

14. **Concord Church, Pelahatchie**, will host the Providentials Quartet Dec. 11, 7 p.m. A love offering will be taken.



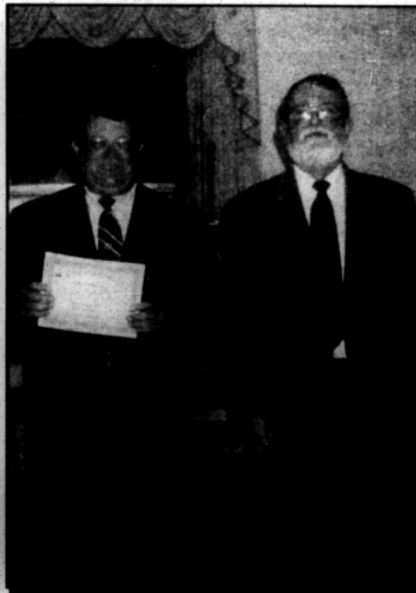
3. Baptism at the Amite River, New Salem Church, Liberty



4. Deacon Ordination, Woodlawn Church, Vicksburg



11. Public Professions of Christ, Drew Church, Drew



10. Deacon, Crossroads Church, Petal



6. Deacon Ordination, First Church, Lyman

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

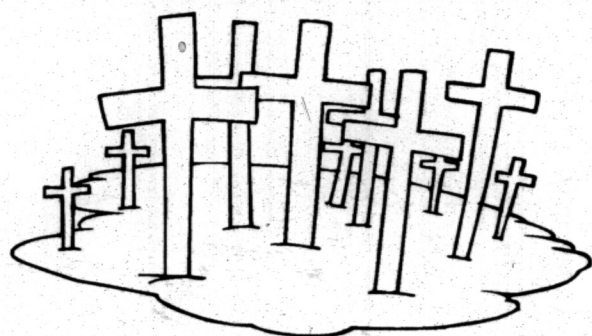
HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

December 8, 2005

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

White Crosses Represent Fifty Million American Babies



**33rd ANNIVERSARY
ROE VS. WADE
50 million innocent
aborted victims in 33 years...
10 A DAY IN MISSISSIPPI**

Join churches across the state of Mississippi
by creating a display of white crosses
somewhere on your church property in
order to proclaim our message that
all life is precious to God.

Since there have been fifty million innocents lost to
abortion since 1973, we are asking that you display
fifty crosses, January 14-22, 2006; one cross for every
million babies. Each church is asked to construct and
paint their own crosses and to videotape your
church members and church sign as you place them
in the ground.

Send a copy of the videotape to the **CHRISTIAN
ACTION COMMISSION OF THE MISSISSIPPI
BAPTIST CONVENTION BOARD** so that we can
edit it with footage from other churches and present
an encouraging pro-life video to the 2006 Mississippi
Baptist Convention.

*Psalm 139:13-14, "For you formed my inward
parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. I will
give thanks to you for I am fearfully and wonder-
fully made."*

PRO-LIFE CONFERENCE

**Thursday, January 19, 2006
Mississippi Baptist Convention Building**

Special Guest: Peter A. Samuelson, Esq.
President of Americans United for Life (AUL)

Conferences 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.

The topics that will be covered are issues that the Mississippi Legislature
will be addressing in 2006: Euthanasia, In Vitro Fertilization, Cloning, and
Destructive Embryo Research.

Banquet 6:30 p.m. and Conference 7 p.m.

Banquet cost: \$10

For additional information, calling Rita Wood at (601) 292-3329 or log on
to www.christianaction.com.

Please RSVP by Thursday, January 12, 2006.

Schedule

Friday

January 13

6:30-9:00 p.m.

Saturday

January 14

8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST
**SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA**
2006 Retreat

**January 13 & 14, 2006
Madison Central High School
Band Hall
Madison, Miss.**

REGISTRATION FORM

Name of church _____

Name of orchestra director/participant _____

The number of participants _____

Along with this form, please enclose a list of participants' names, the instrument they play and
which part they prefer to play. This is to ensure that ample music will be available the day of
the rehearsal. MBSO members, please check with your minister of music. If he/she has mailed
this form, you do not need to send a duplicate registration.

PREREGISTRATION REQUESTED

Send registration to: Church Music Department • MBSO • PO Box 530 • Jackson MS 39205-0530

MISSIONSNow WEEKEND

A coed missions weekender
for 7th - 12th grade youth
and their leaders.



MARCH 3-5
CALVARY BC,
JACKSON
COST: \$25

Call for WMU for info: 1-800-748-1651 or 601-292-3323

Deacon Ministry Emphasis Week 2006: January 8-14, 2006



Deacon Ministry Emphasis

is a plan with specific actions that highlight deacon ministries and involve deacon training and service.

The Purpose Of Deacon Emphasis Is To:

- Focus on their biblical role
- Build team relationships
- Secure involvement in ministries
- Develop skills for ministry

For other projects and information, contact:

Pastor/Leadership Development

Keith Gordon, consultant, 601-968-3800, extension 307, or 1-800-748-1651

SINGLE RESOLUTION

Feb. 23-25, 2006

Broadmoor Baptist Church, Madison **Speaker:** Tate Cockrell

SINGLES' SECOND SATURDAYS

Every month, Jan.-Oct.

The ROC, Broadmoor Baptist Church, Madison

MANGOS

(METRO AREA'S NEW GATHERING OF SINGLES)

Every third Thursday from Jan.-Apr.

Truitt Memorial Baptist Church, Pearl

MISS. SINGLE MINISTER'S FELLOWSHIP

Thursday, Feb. 2

(For staff ministers with single adult responsibilities)

Location: Camp Garaywa, Clinton Time: 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

SOUTH SINGLE-SINGLE AGAIN CONFERENCE

Saturday, Feb. 4, Easthaven BC, Brookhaven

For more info: Discipleship and Family Ministry Department
1-800-748-1651, 601-292-3373 or gshows@mbcb.org

Mississippi Baptist Youth Evangelism Conference

A.E. WOOD COLISEUM

MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE, CLINTON

DECEMBER 29-30, 2005

Registration begins at 1 p.m.

First session starts at 2:30 p.m.

Concludes Friday at 4 p.m.



Landon Dowden
Speaker



Jason Flann
Worship Leader



A View From
the Branch
Drama Team

PRAY

When a believing person prays, great things happen!

James 5:16

contact Youth Ministry
or 1-800-748-

FEAR NO EVIL PREVIEWS

NO EVIL

with
McWilliams

to attend!

Church

Church

Warren I

Preregistration is requested. All previews are from 9 a.m.-noon. The cost is \$10, which includes brunch and a copy of the study course book.

For more information, contact the
Discipleship and Family Ministry
Department, at

1-800-748-1651 or 601-292-3287.

2006 State Evangelism Conference January 23-24, 2006 Fairview Baptist Church, Columbus

"Pray Over Columbus" (for everyone)
9 a.m. • January 23

The MBCB Women's Visionary Team, and the wMu directors and women's ministry leaders of Area 2 and Area 4 invite everyone to participate in this special prayer effort before the State Evangelism Conference begins.

Ministers' Spouses Lunch (just for the ladies)
"No One Can Fill Your Shoes ... Walking Worthy of HIS Calling"
Ephesians 4:1-3
11:30 a.m. • January 23

Ladies, be sure to bring your pastor's wife to this lunch planned especially for them. Special guests will be Page Hughes, keynote speaker, and Janet Rayford, music.



Page Hughes
Anchor Ministries



Janet Rayford
Crestwood New Life BC, Jackson

For more info: Kathy Burns, wMu, 601-292-3324, 1-800-748-1651, kburns@mbcb.org

THE SUIT PROJECT

Merry Christmas

TO PASTORS IN THE NORTHWEST BAPTIST
CONVENTION (OREGON AND WASHINGTON)

For 41 years Mississippi Baptists have enjoyed sending suits to pastors in new work areas.

Each suit costs \$130. Take it on as a group project!

Make checks out to the Mississippi Baptist
Convention Board and designate it to
THE SUIT PROJECT.

If funds are available, we will send a clothing gift
certificate to the pastor's wife!

Send checks to: Men's Ministry Department
PO Box 530
Jackson MS 39205-0530

CPAF 2006 Special Emphasis: CLOWNING



with special guest
Chagy the Clown
conferences

- Drama
- Clowning
- Media
- Puppets
- Church Recreation
- Youth Ministry
- Missions

Discipleship and Family Ministry
Department, 601-292-3283,
1-800-748-1651 or
redwards@mbcb.org



Friday, February 24

5:45 p.m.	Registration
6:30	Welcome & Introduction (in the auditorium)
7:00	Session 1
8:15	Session 2
9:25	Creative Worship

Saturday, February 25

8:00 a.m.	Late Registration
8:15	Open Performance
8:45	Session 3
10:00	Break, Shopping
10:45	Session 4
12:00	Lunch, Open Performance
	Shopping
2:00 p.m.	Session 5
3:15	Creative Worship
4:15	Dismiss

SAFE FAMILIES SUNDAY

Protect Your Family



Four Critical Issues
Discussed On One Sunday:
Bible Study, Morning Worship,
Discipleship Training, and Evening
Worship

Choose Four of the
Following:

- Substance Abuse
- Pornography
- Gambling
- Sanctity of Life
- Homosexual Agenda
- Christian Citizenship

For more information or to schedule a
Sunday, please contact the Christian Action
Commission at 601-292-3329 or toll free in
Mississippi at 1-800-748-1651 or by E-mail
at rwood@christianaction.com or by fax at
601-292-3350.



Pray this day for...

December 9, 2005-January 12, 2006

"We cannot expect to successfully face difficulties unless we have already filled our lives with prayer."

Daryl Cornett, Chairman of the Church History Department
Mid-America Baptist Seminary

Over 900 cars, buses and trucks have been incinerated in France! Innocent citizens are caught in the violence. The economic fallout is high. Fifty people are now unemployed because of it. Pray that representatives and Parisian believers will be courageous. Pray that all people in Paris would turn to Christ.

Please pray for many new outreach groups and churches to form in Thailand before the end of 2005, and intercede for unity and vision and purpose between Bangkok Metro Team members and national believers in Thailand.

For: Christmas Day - What Shall I Give Him? "What shall I give Him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would give a lamb. If I were a wise man, I would do my part; But such as I have I give Him. Give Him my heart." Selected

Pete Rivera, Sarasota, Fla., serves as multiethnic field missionary for the central and southwest region of Fla. Pray for the starting of three new congregations: a Brazilian congregation in Sarasota, a Haitian and a Hispanic congregation in Pine Manor.

Every tribe of Kenya and East Africa dwell in the capital of Nairobi, Kenya. The city continues to grow from its present population of 3.5 million. Nearly 60% of Nairobi's people squeeze into about 50 slums that comprise only 6% of the total residential land of the city. Pray the Holy Spirit will set the urban subcultures on fire to plant churches.

Give thanks to God for the 21 students who are expected at the Burkina Faso Baptist Union Pastor's School from the Sanwaho area. This is more than double the highest number sent from that region in the past and four times the number in the last group of students!

You prayed for CT, a young woman missionary Nancy Norton met when serving at the World Expo in Aichi, Nagoya. She was connected to two Christian who met with her in October. They report that CT made no response to their sharing of their faith. Pray that God will touch CT to want to believe in Jesus.

The Todos Santos Main are an indigenous Mayan people group who live in the Western Highlands of Guatemala. The new Testament is available in their language and the entire Bible is available in a related Main language. Pray for the evangelization of the Todos Santos Main.

Pray for a new church plant in a Niamey among the Zerma of Niger. Give thanks to God for the local pastor and his family. They are passionate about sharing Christ and have moved to this neighborhood in order to live and interact daily with the people. This pastor has recently found employment to support his family. He is bivocational.

Many prayed last month for new work in an area of a megacity in Indonesia. As a result of survey trips and prayerwalking teams, the "mass peace" (Luke 10:6) has been found in that area. Relationships have been established. Intercede that the Father will protect these new relationships with the potential to reach thousands of people.

The Nyika people of Zambia have been raised from childhood with traditional customs and rituals that teach them to appease the spirits so that their crops will flourish or their children will stay healthy. Pray that the Nyika will be released from their fear of the spirits by hearing and trusting Jesus Christ.

Michael Jeffries is a chaplain serving in Iraq. Pray for soldiers who have returned from Iraq as they are adjusting to being reunited with their families. Also pray for the families who move through this period of transition.

Pray for a church-planting team in the mega-city of Sao Paulo, Brazil, as they seek to reach out to the young people and young women in that great city. Pray that those who have recently made decisions will continue to grow in the Lord.

New training was begun in September to teach several men how to use chronological Bible storying among the Samburu of Kenya. They are meeting with a missionary to learn the stories, and then share them with others. Pray that they will be able to learn the stories, and learn about God through them.

Darren and Beth Jones, Huntsville, Texas, are directors of HIVE (Huntsville Inner-city Village Evangelism), a ministry to reach people living in mobile home parks and apartment complexes. Pray for volunteers to be trained so that the work can continue to grow.

Pray for Dr. Robert F. Reccord as he leads the North American Mission Board in assisting and equipping missionaries who are starting new churches and meeting physical and spiritual needs throughout North America.

Pray for the men and women who are translating Bible stories into the Ladakhi language of Northern India. Due to spiritual opposition, and perhaps simple humaneness, the work is progressing at a painfully slow pace. Having stories on tape will greatly aid the Word getting out.

Jason Davis is the pastor of Grace Park, a new church start in Spring Hill, Tenn. Spring Hill is one of the fastest growing cities in the nation and is heavily unchurched. Pray for the church and for Christ's love to be shown in the area.

Many of the Taabwa people in Zambia fled their homes due to civil war and have lived in refugee camps for seven years, having to learn a new way of life. Within the refugee camps a few churches meet but they have no pastors or trained leaders. Pray for the churches outside the camp to visit and be an encouragement to them.

When asked how her community had responded to her decision to follow Christ, the young Bengali mother responded, "They burned our house while we were gone, and the Muslim merchants will not allow us to shop in their stores." Then she smiled, "These are small things compared to the joy of knowing Jesus!" Pray for all Muslim background Christians.

Recently a Brazilian youth group was having a special activity on the beach when assaulted at gunpoint by two men. The thieves frisked them and searched their cars. They gave the thieves a gospel tract and told them God has a much better road for their lives. Pray that God will use that tract to reach those men.

Pray for the Baptist Convention of Tanzania, its leaders and their Convention issues. Long-time headmaster at Kipoko Secondary School, PM, died on September 9. Pray for his family and for the school board as they seek a new headmaster. Pray for the Kigoma Baptist Hospital as they try to reopen in-patient services and increase local funding.

For: (1) Youth Evangelism Conference, A.E. Wood Coliseum, Mississippi College, Clinton, 2 p.m., 29th - 3 p.m., 30th (Evangelical Youth Ministry); (2) Please pray today for Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey (eastern Mediterranean, between Greece and Syria).

Kerry Haynes, Ocean Shores, Wash., Fort Lewis Army Reserve chaplain, works with reserve and guard soldiers in transit to and from Iraq, Afghanistan, and other overseas locations. Pray for the injured soldiers delayed in joining their families and for Kerry to represent Christ's love in all his counseling sessions, classes and chapel services.

Pray for International Mission Board missionaries who serve in Panama. Ask that each missionary will impact lossiness in this country and that through their commitment to Him, God will be glorified through establishing new churches.

Randy Shaddox is a volunteer chaplain with the Tulsa, Okla. Police Department and a part-time chaplain with American Hospice. Pray for good time management, for wisdom to deal with patients who are dying and for ability to relate to families who have lost loved ones.

The Silti young people of Ethiopia in school don't have a consistent school schedule. The teachers may call off school or the students just not show up. The culture is only beginning to value a completion of high school. Pray that the schools hire and keep qualified teachers and the students take their studies seriously.

Thank you for praying about the ongoing music project for the Bridge people of the Pacific Rim. Ten songs have been written in the national language, and people are translating these into the language of the Bridge people. Pray that the translators would know words that truly communicate the message of Christ.

The Sopron house group of Western Hungary meets twice a week for worship, Bible study, sharing the gospel with others, ministry and fellowship. Pray that they will continue to grow in both size and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and become a healthy, vibrant church that impacts the city of Sopron with the Good News of Christ.

As Christians, we have the assurance of being made complete when we stand before God. Most Bedouin women of Northern Africa are religious and have respect for God, but are not complete in Him because they seek God apart from Jesus Christ. Pray that these women will seek God through Jesus Christ so that they can stand complete before God.

A Padilleros para Cristo Team member in Nicaragua writes: "The Lord led my new team member G and myself to a new barrio this week to talk with a dangerous gang. They were very open to the gospel and invited us to return. Please pray for this gang to respond in a positive way to God's Word."

The Iringa Urban Team of Tanzania writes, "Praise God that He is continuing to bless among the people of Issakalilo. The father of our host family is a recognized community leader. He is so on fire with love of learning God's Word, that he shares it with his neighbors as well. Pray for God's purpose here to unfold unhindered in His timing."

Please pray that God would give guidance as to where He wants new chronological Bible study groups to be started for Ruzo Dominicans of the Dominican Republic. Pray that the existing groups will grow and that their leaders will want to grow spiritually.

"God is faithfully drawing the Lebou of Senegal to Himself," writes the Lebou Team. "We have begun a new Bible study on Monday nights. This Bible study is for those specifically seeking to see what worship is all about. Pray for all those who attend to have the blinders torn from their eyes and their hearts softened to accept the Truth."

Ray and Patsy Eitelman, missionaries to Togo, write, "We are giving thanks for answers to your prayers for the pastors' training seminar in how to interest Muslims in the gospel. The conference touched the 107 church leaders who attended. Thank you for praying that many pastors would be able to participate in this meeting."

PLEASE NOTE

Church members may send a package of cards together; cards do not have to be sent individually to Stewardship.

FOR SECURITY, cards will be forwarded. Please send all to: Child's name, Parent's name MBCB Stewardship Dept. PO Box 530 Jackson MS 39205

2/16/01

MR. HADDON BLEDSOE
Parents: David & Laurie
General Evangelism
Eastern South America

2/4/85

MR. DAVID M. JOHNSTON
Parents: Vincent & Sharon
Church Planting
Eastern South America

2/12/02

MISS ALICE A. MULLINS
Parents: Frank & Lynn
Church Planting
Western Europe

2/24/00

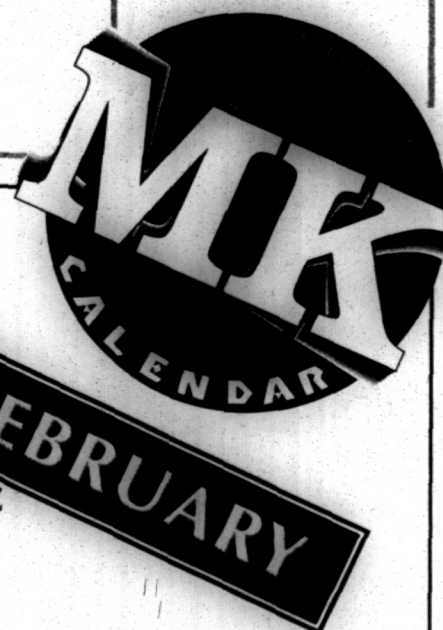
MR. NATHAN PEACOCK
Parents: Kevin & Brenda
Theological Education
Middle America

2/1/04

MR. JOSHUA A. SCHMITZ
Parents: Burton & Suzanne
General Evangelism
West Africa

2/12/03

MISS REBEKAH J. SCHMITZ
Parents: Burton & Suzanne
General Evangelism
West Africa



HOUSE TOPS

JUST FOR THE RECORD



15. Note Burning Ceremony, Hopewell Church, Little Rock

15. **Hopewell Church, Little Rock**, held a banquet and note burning service. Shown are pastor Jimmy McDill, front row, third from left, and deacons of the church.

16. The Children in Action and the Women on Missions of **Coldwater Church, Philadelphia**, collected 28 boxes for Operation Christmas Child.

17. **Bellevue Church, Pontotoc Association**, ordained Steven Ray Phillips to the gospel ministry. Shown are James Burke, Chuck Fowler, Phillips, George Stewart, and Tommy Inmon.

18. Earl Clardy was ordained as a deacon at **West End Church, West Point**. Shown, front, are Lisa Clardy, Norma Clardy, Boyce Clardy, and Clardy; Mike Mathena, back. Boyce Clardy passed away three weeks after the ordination.

◆ ◆ ◆
www.mbc.org



17. Ordination, Bellevue Church, Pontotoc Association



16. Operation Christmas Child, Coldwater Church, Philadelphia



18. Deacon Ordination, West End Church, West Point

COLLEGE AND SEMINARY NEWS



1. Wheelers donate trust fund, WCC

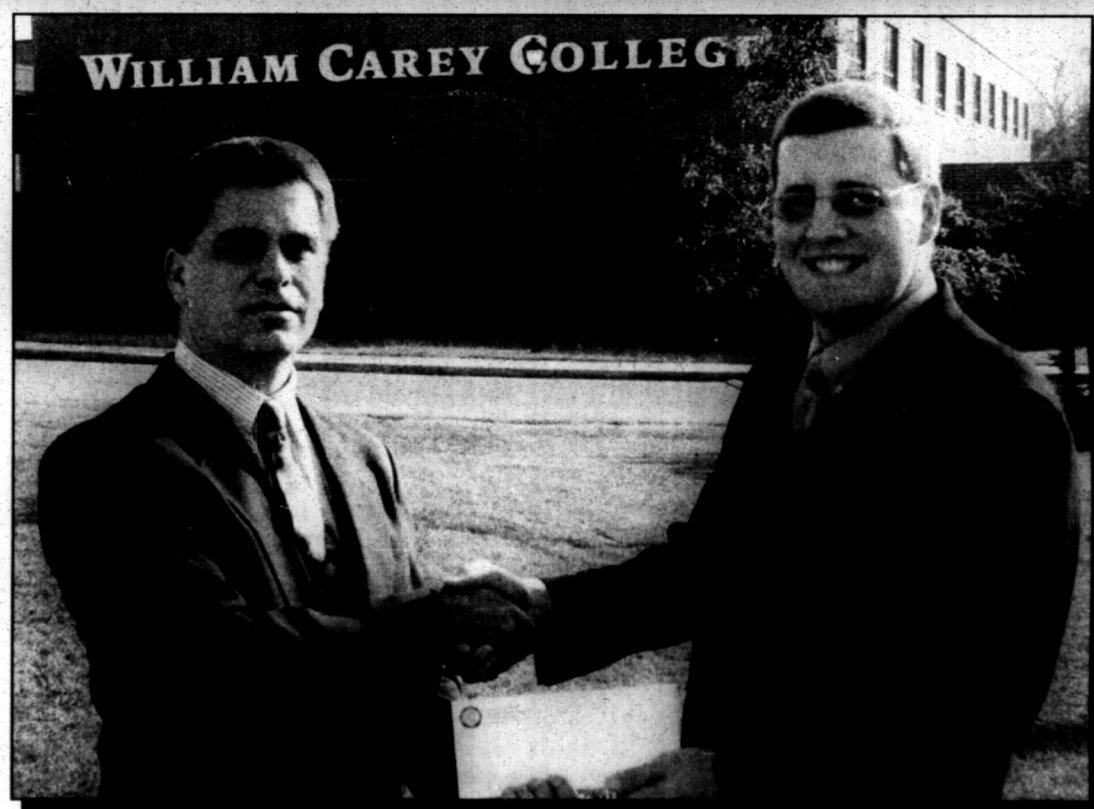
1. Donna and Milton Wheeler announced to the faculty of **William Carey College** that by way of a trust fund through the Mississippi Baptist Foundation they were leaving approximately \$2.3 million to the college. One-fourth of the monies are designated for the base-

ball program, one-fourth to the library, one-fourth to maintenance and one-fourth to capital improvements. Donna Wheeler has given 41 years of service through various staff positions and currently holds the Director of Alumni Relations position. Milton Wheeler has been a professor of history for 42 years.

2. **William Carey College** student James Joseph Marsh, a religion and history major from Hattiesburg, was awarded the Therman Bryant Memorial Scholarship by the Board of Ministerial Education of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

3. The Winters School of Music at **William Carey College** will present "Christmas at Carey" Dec. 13 at 7 p.m. in the Smith Auditorium of the Thomas Fine Arts Center located on the Hattiesburg campus. This Christmas inspired concert will feature Carey's Piano Ensemble, Carpenter's Wood, Carey Carillon, and the Instrumental Ensemble. Admission is free to this family friendly event. For more information call the school of music at (601) 318-6175.

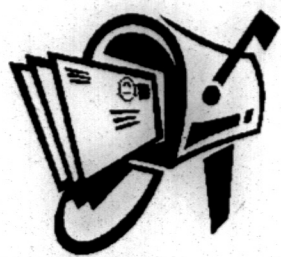
4. Some of the nation's foremost biblical scholars will converge at **Southeastern Seminary** Feb. 3-4, 2006, to lead the second annual 20/20 Collegiate Conference. Headlining this year's conference are keynote speakers Norman Geisler, president of Southern Evangelical Seminary in Charlotte, NC, and Southeastern Seminary President Daniel Akin. In



3. Marsh awarded Scholarship, WCC

addition, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill professor Bart Ehrman, the chairman of the school's Department of Religious Studies, Duke University Divinity School associate professor of New Testament Richard Hays and Southeastern professor of New Testament Andreas Kostenberger will join Geisler in participating in a panel discussion regarding Dan Brown's best-selling book *The Da Vinci Code*. The discus-

sion will give the diverse panel of nationally-recognized scholars an opportunity to weigh in on the book, which will debut as a major motion picture starring Tom Hanks in May 2006, and its impact on American Christianity today. Those interested in attending the conference can find additional information, including registration, at the 20/20 Conference website (www.sebts.edu/2020) or by calling (888) 290-7787.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

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www.steeplesetc.com

KEEP US INFORMED

Editor:

I just wanted to say that I really enjoyed your articles on House Bill 45 (land-based casinos). I am so glad that you keep us informed on what's happening. I really appreciated the list of senators and representatives who voted for and against House Bill 45. I just want the senators and representatives (who voted against land-based casinos) to know that they will be remembered and will get my vote. I also want Governor Haley Barbour to know that he won't.

I really respect the ones that stood tall and said "no!" I think some of you shook up our Governor when you said "no!"

Thanks to all of you, and a special thanks to our Lt. Governor, Senator Gary Jackson, and Representative Dannie Reed. I am from Webster County and I am so proud of our senators and our representatives.

Shirley Gore
Eupora

APPRECIATE VOLS

Editor:

On October 16, Pike Association at its fall meeting passed a Resolution of Appreciation expressing our thanks and gratitude to the many churches, associations, state conventions, agencies, businesses, and individuals that gave of themselves in selfless service in meeting the needs of thousands of people who became "strangers within our gates" because of Hurricane Katrina.

Space will not allow us to name all of these who were so instrumental in bring comfort and relief to all of us. There were many Baptist churches and other denominations and races that opened their doors to evacuees as shelters or hosted chainsaw groups. They served meals and provided clothing, medications, and lodging to countless numbers during this time. The evacuees were provided medications, comfort, and counseling from our medical center. Radio stations and local newspapers provided us with helpful information during the time most citizens were without power.

City and County officials, Civil Defense, the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, area fire departments, National Guard, utility companies and local service agencies did a tremendous job of helping people get back to some sort of normalcy.

We are very appreciative to the Missouri Baptist Convention Board's Disaster Relief Unit and numerous Baptist Associations and churches of all denominations that sent in smaller units.

God brought together many different churches, civic groups, organizations, and

people from all walks of life to aid our fellowman in time of need. Pike Association wishes to say a big "thank you" to all.

Resolutions Committee
Pike Association, McComb

THANKS, MISS. BAPTISTS

Editor:

I want to express my deep appreciation to Mississippi Baptists and the staff of Central Hills Retreat. On September 22, the Oklahoma Baptist Disaster Relief team serving at Belle Chasse, La., was evacuated to Central Hills due to Hurricane Rita. The entire Central Hills staff went above and beyond the call to accommodate us on such a short notice. Our living quarters were wonderful, the food was outstanding, and the staff demonstrated Christ's care and compassion.

Thank you, Mississippi Baptists, for providing a top-notch facility for retreats, camps, and, yes, even a place of refuge.

Kirk Holloway
Minister of Music/Education
First Church, Chandler, Ok.

GAMBLING MESSAGE

Editor:

I saw your recent appearance on television and applaud your stance on legalized gambling. You might pass along to your governor the following message from J. Emmett Henderson, head of the Georgia Council on Moral and Civic Concerns, from the Crown Ministries booklet entitled, The Truth about Gambling and Lotteries:

Lotteries and other legalized gambling ventures express the age-old fantasy of acquiring wealth painlessly, without effort or labor. Common sense tells us life does not function that way. No state can turn its back on initiative and hard work and expect its economy to prosper. Wage earners cannot buy lottery tickets and lose their money at casinos and still maintain the same level of purchasing power to buy food, clothing, and other nec-

essary marketplace commodities. A wholesome and prosperous society is one that is built on hard work, creativity, thrift, and government integrity. State gambling operations undermine the work ethic, hurt the economy, and add to unemployment statistics and welfare rolls. Its promotion by government is nothing but another siren song luring the nation toward the rocks of economic ruin!

God bless you and your work against this dreadful sin.

Donald G. Siedenburgh
Shawnee, Kn.

ENOUGH RHETORIC

Editor:

I write this to you not to tell you what you should write about but only to say, I for one have heard and read enough of the rhetoric regarding gambling.

I include Jimmy Porter (executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission) because he mailed to me and other pastors in the state a letter asking us to call our legislative body to get them to bring the issue to a statewide vote. Then, in the body of the same letter he asked us to tell our legislators that when they didn't listen to us and passed the land-based act that we should tell them to distribute the gambling money to the entire state and not just the counties where the casinos are.

I respect your right to voice your disapproval regarding this issue. Yet, there are many Baptists in this state who have a deep personal faith and are outraged by "righteousness" of the "Christian Right" tone that The Baptist Record voices. I have very strong evangelical leanings but because of what has taken place in our Convention the last couple of years I have a marked distaste for the way we put the politics of exclusivity in with our new theology.

As for listing the senators and representatives who voted for land based casinos, where has the autonomy of the Baptist faith gone?

I hope you receive this with the spiritual modesty for which

it was written. I make no claims to have the answers. I only wish we would strive for unity in the midst of diversity.

John Brashier, pastor
Calvary Church, Jackson

ILL-GOTTEN GAIN

Editor:

In the early state constitutions, at a time when many people knew the Bible was the answer to life, gambling was outlawed because it was harmful to society. Oh yes, we hear that we have to have the money, but beginner's knowledge tells us ill-gotten gain never helps anything and our Lord will see to it that we are better off without it. Businesses believe they have to be open on Sunday, yet Chick-Fil-A refuses to do that and their profits increase rather than fall behind the others.

There was gambling on the Gulf Coast before Hurricane Camille blew it all away in 1969. There was no further mention of it for years. However, as we became complacent and materialistic, the push was on for its return. Now our Lord has blown it all away again.

We have no count of the families that gambling has wrecked or the suicides caused. I heard a former governor say there were four suicides in his town because of gambling. If we are tempted to say again that we must have the money, we will do well to stop and think about the billions Hurricane Katrina has cost.

Meta Hogue
Jackson

ENDLESS PROMISES

Editor:

Please continue your opposition to extending gambling in your state. In my area of Atlantic City, N.J., the endless promises made by the gambling industry never have been realized. Instead, we have had the extension of crime, drugs, corruption, and prostitution.

A.E. Lear
Atlantic City, N.J.

STAFF CHANGE



Leaf River Church, Smith County, has called Danny Dickerson as their pastor effective Dec. 4.

First Church, Leakesville, has called Philip Price as pastor effective Dec. 11.

Price Wade Baptist, Jackson Association, has called Joe Ditsworth as Youth Ministry intern. Joe has been a member of Wade Baptist Church for three years and was recently licensed to the Gospel ministry.

Ditsworth, Wade Church, Jackson Association



Practical Principles for Christian Living

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN ACTION COMMISSION OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION • VOLUME 5 • ISSUE 9

A Christmas "With" Christ

By Jimmy Porter



Porter

In a recent Bible study on Psalm 3, I paused after reading verse one which says, "O Lord, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me!" I asked, "What are or who are some of the foes that rise up against the Christian community today?" The first response was, "Those who want to take Christ out of Christmas." The usual responses then followed the media, the drug pushers, and the homosexual community and others.

Over the years there has been a subtle but calculated effort to remove the story of Christ and His redeeming love from the Christmas Season. The "grinches" have attempted to blend Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's into one great big profitable "Holiday Season." Under the umbrella of "political correctness" they have tried to minimize or com-

pletely remove the Biblical stories that tell of Christ's birth.

No doubt you have read accounts of major retailers removing the word Christmas from their advertisements and greetings. It is no longer "Christmas Trees" or "Merry Christmas" but "Holiday Trees" and "Season Greetings." Lawsuits have been filed to force the removal of nativity scenes from public property. Schools have been threatened and intimidated by various organizations and groups who desire the removal of the traditional Christmas parties and plays the children have been enjoying for years.

Dr. Richard Land, President of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, recently wrote to the CEO of Target Corporation asking him to review the company's policy of omitting Christmas from their greetings and advertisements. He pointed out that approximately 85 percent of the United States population is either Christian or sympathetic with

Christianity; therefore, it might not be economically sound to continue such a course of action.

The Alliance Defense Fund of Scottsdale, Arizona, and the Liberty Counsel of Orlando, Florida, have enlisted the services of 1500 lawyers who are ready to file suits to protect the holiday celebrations. These countermeasures seem to be working. In Boston, a web page for the city changed "holiday tree" to "Christmas tree" after the citizens complained. The American Family Association has just reported that Walgreen's has issued this statement: "Next year, you can be assured our advertising will better incorporate 'Christmas,' and our holiday trees will be called Christmas Trees."

Some might wonder, "What is the big deal or why such a fuss?" Christmas is all about Christ. It is the beautiful story of God's love which resulted in His coming to earth to provide salvation for the world. For some who live among us this is the only time they are ever con-

fronted with their sin and their need of a Savior. It is the only time some ponder what it means to be a Christian. This is why it matters.

For me, a Christmas without the Biblical teachings of the Christ event would be a meaningless holiday. Hopefully you will be sensitive to keeping Christ the center of all you do this Christmas. Do not be afraid to ask the retailers with whom you do business to keep Christ in their greetings and advertisements. You have the upper hand because you have the dollars that keep them afloat. Use them wisely.

You, the Baptists of Mississippi, have been on the front lines battling for Christian values this past year. Sometimes that battle has been at the Capitol but most often it has been in your community. Right now the citizens of Alcorn County are facing a liquor referendum next Tuesday, December 13th. They should be enjoying the Christmas season but our foes and enemies never rest.

Therefore, the battles continue. Pray for Alcorn County as they vote on this most important issue next week.

The Christian Action Commission staff and our Board of Trustees thank you for your support and prayers throughout 2005. Next year we will face many of the same old foes along with some new ones. Beginning in January our legislators will be in session. Your help will be needed to get some bills passed and some killed. I encourage you to choose a legislator to pray for every single day throughout the session. Most of them have a sincere desire to do what is morally right and just.

Lee Yancey, Rita Wood, and I pray for you to have a Merry Christmas that is filled with Christ and a New Year that is filled with God's presence and peace.

Porter is executive director-treasurer of the Christian Action Commission. He can be reached at jporter@christianaction.com.

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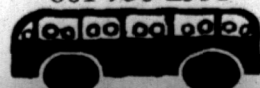
MS POSITIONS

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF PICAYUNE, MISS., is seeking a full-time children's minister. Please send resume to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 477, Picayune, MS 39466, attn: personnel committee.

SALEM-TROY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION is searching for a Director of Missions. Please send resumes or recommendations to search committee, Salem-Troy Baptist Association, 51 County Road 2233, Troy, AL 36079.

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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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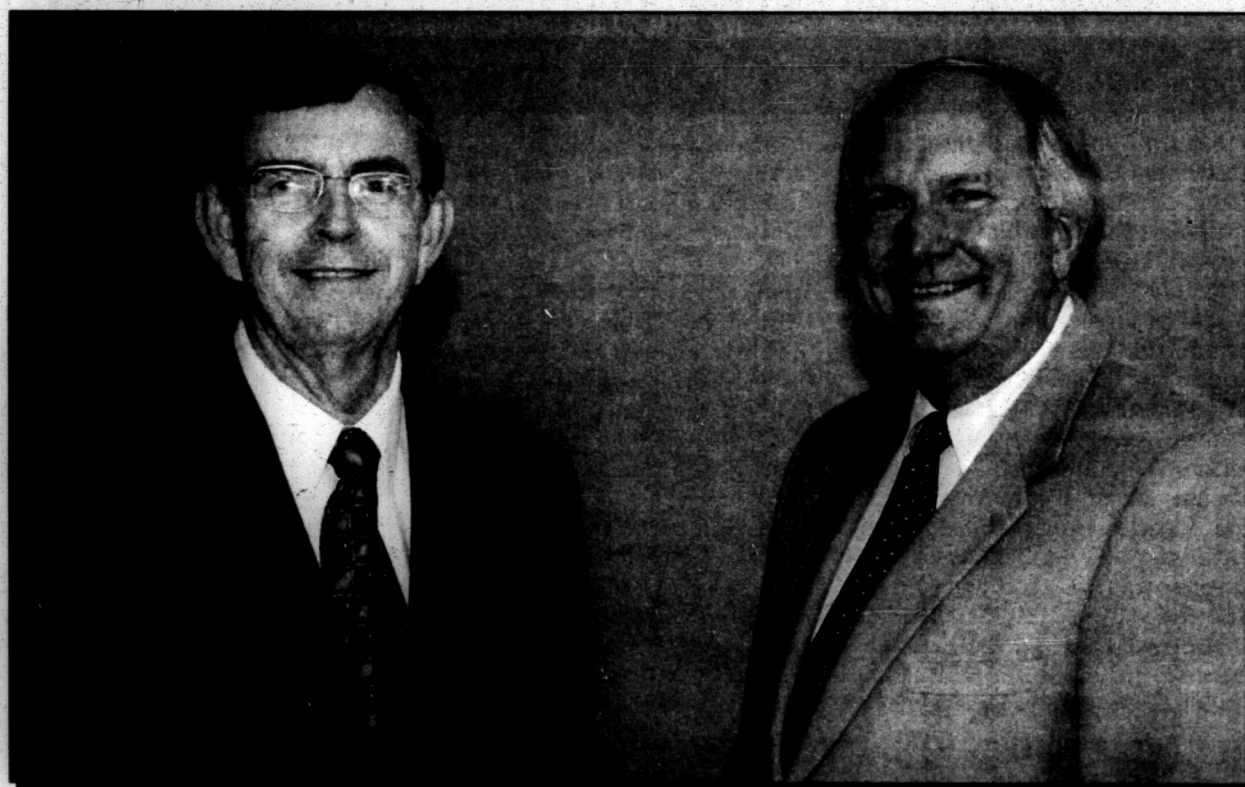
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Rev. Wayne Edwards of Meridian and Mr. Roy Fountain of Forest were recently recognized by Rory Lee, BCV Executive Director, as the newest members of The Baptist Children's Board of Trustees.

2006 Board of Trustees Newly Elected Members

Rev. Charles Cooper of Rienzi was recently elected to serve as the 2006 President of the Board of Trustees for The Baptist Children's Village.



FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Why Me?

Romans 1:1-7, 13-17

By Don Hicks

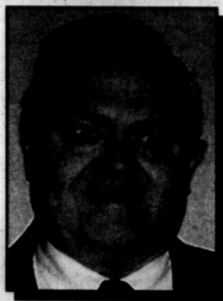
Can you say with the Apostle Paul, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel?" (Romans 1:16) Does your daily lifestyle show that you are proud to be a Christian?

Paul gave us the reason that he was not ashamed of the Gospel. "Because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile," (Romans 1:16). When we are honest about how hard it is to live consistently in a way that shows publicly we are proud to be Christians it causes us to look for reasons to help us. That is what Paul is saying here — it's the power of God that allows us to live this unashamed lifestyle.

In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians he explains what is

going on here. "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God," (1 Corinthians 1:18). Actually, there is an unfortunate amount of similarity in the society Paul lived and the one we live in. Many folks really believe they know more than God and certainly are wiser than the superstitions of religion.

Paul said "but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles," (1 Corinthians 1:23). You might choose to use different names for the groups who consider the Christian Gospel foolishness or find it a stumbling block but doesn't the sentence sound like a description of 21st century America. Have you heard



Hicks

anyone say, "You can't really be as arrogant enough to believe that Christianity knows the only way to live — can you?" Or have you heard anyone say: "He comes from a different culture. Why not let him believe whatever he was taught in his culture?"

Our focal text for this lesson ends with Paul explaining further: "For in the Gospel a righteousness of God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith,'" (Romans 1:17). To truly understand and accept the truths of God is a matter of faith from the beginning to end. We need to thank God for giving us the faith that leads to our salvation if we have indeed accepted Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, and we need to understand those who do not understand our faith will need to come to faith in Jesus to ever understand.

We need to ask God to set us apart to the Gospel so we can live daily as servants of Christ Jesus. This was Paul's starting point for this letter he wrote the Roman Church. American independence and "can do" attitude has a hard time dealing with the idea of becoming a slave. It is hard in our American culture to not be ashamed of becoming a slave. When you read this verse in translations like the New International Version that use the word servant rather than slave it is hard to get the full impact of what Paul was saying when he said I am a slave of Christ Jesus. The HCSB use of the word slave more clearly translates what Paul was saying. Paul was a proud Roman citizen who from time to time used his Roman citizenship to provide him with greater opportunities. Paul was a Pharisee and Jewish ruler and rabbi. With this background it was no small change of attitude to proudly proclaim himself a slave.

A servant might be filling a role for a short time of his own free will for pay or other reasons. A slave was owned by the master and could make no independent decisions or moves. Paul explained further in Romans 1:1 that God had set him apart for the Gospel.

Then in the sixth verse Paul says, "And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ." This is good news for us who have accepted Christ as our Lord. We, too, are called as apostles [ones appointed to share God's message] and set apart for the Gospel.

Paul had never been to Rome and did not know the people he was writing. Paul does not know me personally and has never been to my church. Remembering this makes it easier for me to apply the truth that Paul could know that God has set me apart for the Gospel when I became a Christian.

Hicks is a member of First Church, Clinton.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

"Call to Faith"

Romans 10:1-4, 8-18b, 21

By Shirley Heap

Paul's writings of good news bring out such heartfelt concern for his own people, the Jews. Can you imagine living in the day of Christ and hearing His teachings and rejecting them? We must not speak too harshly of the Jew's rejection. Today, many who have been totally immersed in the Gospel week after week seem to feel the need "to be good enough." This lesson, "Call to Faith," has great truths that many cannot grasp. Would that all may heed this call.

As a young pastor's wife, we were blessed to live in rural areas most of our ministry. Coming from city life, our boys were eager to explore the wooded area around our house. My only orders were,

"you can only go as far as hearing distance. Then when I call, you must answer by the second call or you are in trouble." One day I could not get a response when I called. After rounding them up, we were discussing the original plan. The youngest said, "But Mama, we didn't hear you until the third call." Oh, how much like little children we are. Hearing, but unheeding we feel the Lord will call again. Yes, we always have an answer ready that begins with, "But..."

We Cannot Save Ourselves, Romans 10:1-4

Last week we saw our great need for God's mercy. Paul asks the question, "What shall we say then? (Rom. 9:30a) The



Heap

Gentiles attained righteousness by faith. Yet the Jews had heard the same gospel and pursued righteousness by the law and failed to attain righteousness. The stone, which is Christ, was laid before them. "They stumbled over the stumbling stone."

(Rom. 9:26b).

As God's chosen people, even they could not achieve salvation on their own attempts to keep the law. One must come to realize that only through the Son of God can we receive salvation. "Not of yourselves... lest any man should boast." (Eph 2:8) This seemed to be Paul's theme song. Paul spoke of "having a zeal for God," yet not knowing about God's righteousness, we set out to establish our own righteousness by "good works." (Rom. 10:3)

We Can Be Saved by Faith, (Rom. 10:8-13)

Salvation by faith seems to

be so simple, yet why do so many still try to find salvation on their own merits? Christ came to do for us what we could not do for ourselves. Accepting this by faith as a little child is all God asks of us. Only by faith, or else all Christ did was in vain. Paul tells us in verse 8, it is so near to us, even in our mouths. The same Jesus who came for God's chosen people is the same one who came to save even the Gentiles.

We Can Encourage Others, (Romans 10:14-18b, 21)

Paul asked so many earth-shaking questions in this chapter. The Jews could not blame God for their rejection. Paul knew God wants all people to hear the "gospel of good things" as verse 15 says, and the freedom to accept or reject. The KJV says "gospel of peace" which we know covers the same meaning. Different Greek manuscripts have been used in our versions of today. We know the meaning of this message and how important it is for it to be preached. As

Christians, may our hearts be so in tune with God to present the Gospel to all who are living without it. Many times in our efforts to present this "good news" of what Christ has done for us we see no outward results. Jesus nor Paul ever pressured anyone to believe. Neither should we. Paul stated that it might seem they have never heard, but we know they have. (Rom. 10:18). In verse 21, a very sad proclamation, "All the day long I have stretched out my hands." We must do all we can to encourage others to come to the knowledge that leads to eternal life. Through our prayers and witnessing of what has happened in our life, some will accept and some will reject, just as in Jesus' day and in Paul's day. Verse 17 makes it very clear: "faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." So we should be faithful to speak the Word to those who do not believe or understand.

Heap is a member of Calvary Church, Waynesboro.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts

are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

All news items are subject to editing,

and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape-, building-, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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THE BAPTIST
Record

Lottie offering plays crucial role around world

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Lives around the world are being eternally changed by Southern Baptists' generous support of International Mission Board (IMB) workers through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (LMCO), IMB missionary Judy Miller says.

"People have embraced Jesus Christ as Lord — not as a religion, but in a personal relationship, because of Southern Baptists' sacrificial giving," reports Miller, who works in Cotonou, Benin. She serves in a region of Africa where half the population follows Islam.

Lottie Moon Christmas Offering funds provided support for missionaries and volunteers to traverse the African bush to conduct a medical clinic that treated physical and spiritual needs in southern Benin. A woman who suffered at least three years from an excruciating toothache walked a long distance seeking help. A volunteer physician used equipment from his bag to remove the woman's abscessed teeth.

When the woman realized her pain was gone, she began dancing. She heard a presentation of the Gospel. She saw Christ's love in action as missionaries and volunteers tended to her sick and feeble neighbors.

At the close of the day, the woman who had suffered so long shouted, "I'm saved, I'm saved!"

Southern Baptists' gifts directly influenced this woman's opportunity to accept Jesus Christ as her personal Savior and Lord. They also continued Southern Baptists' recent trend of sacrificial giving — and 2005 has been no different. The International Mission Board received almost \$17 million to meet the needs of tsunami victims in Asia. The North American Mission Board and other organizations have received similar gifts for hurricane victims in the United States.

"We live in a world where there is a constant demand for funding that goes to worthy causes for the victims of terrorism, tsunami sufferers in Asia, and now tragedy on our home soil in the southern United States caused by [hurricanes]," Miller says.

"Thank you, Southern Baptists, for not negating your call to go to the ends of the earth sharing Jesus Christ and His message of redemption. Thank you for caring and ministering to 'the least of these' in the name of Jesus."

During the Week of Prayer for International Missions (Dec. 4-11), Southern Baptists traditionally give generously to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. The national goal for this year's Lottie Moon offering is \$150 million — every penny of which will be used to support 5,122 missionaries around the world. The International Mission Board relies on the Lottie Moon offering for more than half of its annual income.

"We rejoice that this year has been one of the highest in terms of long-term missionaries appointed," said IMB President Jerry Rankin, a Mississippi native and graduate of Baptist-affiliated Mississippi College in Clinton. "Continuing that trend will be contingent on God providing the support needed through our churches."

Rankin noted that unprecedented opportunities for spiritual harvest exist in many places — and a lost world depends on Southern Baptists' cooperative efforts to support their missionaries. In a year of tragedy at home, churches must help one another meet missionaries' ongoing needs abroad.

"We have somewhere between 500 and 1,000 churches that just aren't there anymore because of the hurricanes" on the Gulf Coast, said David Steverson, IMB vice president of finance. "So other Southern Baptist churches need to step up and stand in the gap for those churches that are — at least temporarily — out of commission."

"Southern Baptists have always responded in times of great stress. This is a period of great stress both here and abroad, and we're confident that Southern Baptists will, once again, respond to the challenge to support our missionaries."

At a recent meeting of International Mission Board trustees in Huntsville, Ala., trustees set an example for all Southern Baptists as they personally pledged \$114,061 to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. All 85 IMB trustees participated in the offering, promising \$4,000 more than their original goal. They pledged an average of \$1,342 each.

"With the number of long-term missionaries appointed this year being the highest in the history of Southern Baptists, it is vital our gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering be the greatest as well," said Ken Whitten, senior pas-



YOUNG ORPHANS — Two young African boys stand atop the burial site of their parents who died of AIDS. The boys are among 13 million African children orphaned by the AIDS epidemic in Africa — and the number continues to rise each year at an alarming rate. (BP photo courtesy of Stand for Africa)

tor of Idlewild Baptist Church in Tampa, Fla., and chairman of the IMB trustee finance committee. "Nothing speaks to us about Christmas more than the word 'sacrifice' — God's gift to us, Jesus' life for us and missionaries' service to the Lord because of us."

"Your gift to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering will make it possible for all the nations to hear of God's gift and Jesus' life. 'For God so loved the world, He gave....' Will you be like Him and do the same? My prayer is we all will."

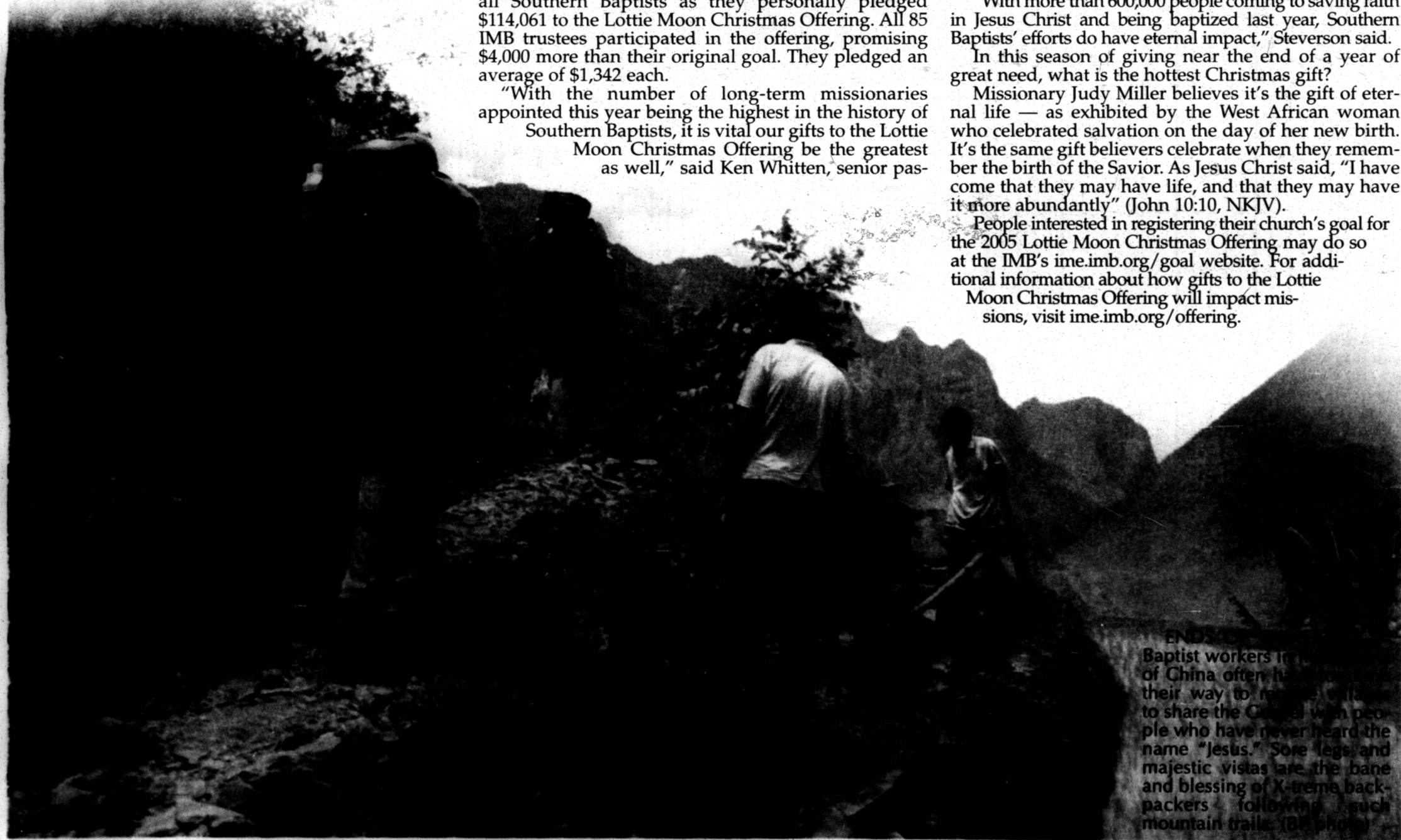
Nearly one in four Southern Baptist churches did not participate in the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering in 2004. But there's still plenty of time, IMB officials say, for all churches to consider what God is leading each believer to give so the Gospel can be shared with all peoples.

"With more than 600,000 people coming to saving faith in Jesus Christ and being baptized last year, Southern Baptists' efforts do have eternal impact," Steverson said.

In this season of giving near the end of a year of great need, what is the hottest Christmas gift?

Missionary Judy Miller believes it's the gift of eternal life — as exhibited by the West African woman who celebrated salvation on the day of her new birth. It's the same gift believers celebrate when they remember the birth of the Savior. As Jesus Christ said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10, NKJV).

People interested in registering their church's goal for the 2005 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering may do so at the IMB's ime.imb.org/goal website. For additional information about how gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering will impact missions, visit ime.imb.org/offering.



ENDS OF THE EARTH — Baptist workers in China often hike their way to remote villages to share the Gospel with people who have never heard the name "Jesus." Sore legs and majestic vistas are the bane and blessing of X-treme backpackers following such mountain trails. (BP photo)